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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 000071

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SUBJECT: SUNNI OUTREACH: AMB CONVEYS U.S. VISION OF
NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[11](#). (C) SUMMARY: On January 7, Ambassador Khalilzad outlined suggested principles for the new Iraqi government during meetings with two Sunni sheikhs recommended to the Ambassador by Lakhdar Brahimi, former Special Advisor to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The Ambassador underlined the

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importance of starting to address polarization in Iraqi society and of finding competent persons from across Iraq's communities to manage top government positions. One sheikh, who claimed connections with the insurgency, was more interested in discussing the withdrawal of MNF-I than the formation of the new government. END SUMMARY.

[12](#). (C) The Ambassador first met with Sheikh Dahran Hawaz al-Sadid, General Secretary of the Arab Democratic Party and member of Saleh Mutlaq's National Dialogue Council. The Ambassador outlined suggested main principles for the National Unity Government:

--A National Unity Government is important to decrease sectarian polarization and increase confidence among all Iraqis.

--Only competent government officials must lead in this pivotal time.

--The new ministers for MOD and MOI should be non-sectarian and free of ties to any militia.

--The government's three main functions -- security, services, and the economy -- require cross-sectarian and cross-ethnic leadership.

[13](#). (C) Sheikh al-Sadid told the Ambassador the "best of the bad" candidates for the next Prime Minister is Ayad Allawi. Sadid claimed Prime Minister Ja'afari's government -- and by association, Vice President Adel Abd al-Mehdi -- had lost the confidence of the Iraqi street.

[14](#). (C) In a separate meeting, Sheikh Khamis Hawaz al-Sidig, a former Iraqi Army Major General from Hillah, offered to submit names of suggested candidates for the top ministerial positions.

[15](#). (C) Sidig, who claims to be close to the insurgents, seemed more concerned about the withdrawal of MNF-I than about formation of the new government. He told the Ambassador much of the insurgent violence is perpetrated by unemployed former Iraqi Army soldiers. Sidig said the insurgents want a timetable for withdrawal of MNF-I but do not want a quick withdrawal.

[16](#). (C) The Ambassador explained MNF-I does not have a timetable for withdrawal but plans to draw down troops gradually as Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) gain competence. He recommended Sidig explain to insurgents that violence is not the answer, and the future of Iraq depends on good governance and respect for the ISF. Sidig suggested MNF-I withdraw from one small area for two weeks to see if violence would decrease, as he predicted. The Ambassador said that he would discuss his proposal with GEN Casey.

[17](#). (SBU) Biographic information: Sheikh Khamis Hawaz al-Sidig has lived in Hillah since 1978. His father is from the United Arab Emirates. He is a member of the Shamar tribe.

[18](#). (C) Sheikh Dahran Hawaz al-Sadid, also from the Shamar tribe, is the General Secretary of the Arab Democratic Party. He is likely to be a member of the Council of Representatives. His party holds six of the ten seats won by Saleh Mutlaq's National Dialogue Council.
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